BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

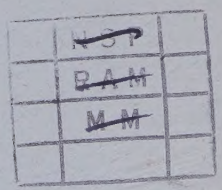
REPORT

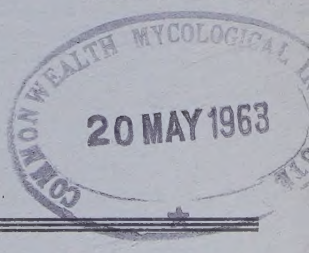
OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOR THE YEAR

1959





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Section 1

REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

1. Weather Conditions

The weather during the year was not ideal for agriculture but pastures showed no evidence of deterioration. The total rainfall for the year recorded at the Agricultural Station was 37.76 inches compared with 60.88 inches in 1958. The rainfall for Anegada showed a slight increase of 34.47 inches compared with 32.63 inches in 1958.

A rain gauge was installed at East End, Tortola late in the year bringing the total in operation to three. It is hoped to install another three in different localities in 1960.

A statement of the monthly rainfall figures for the years 1950—1959 for the Agricultural Station is set out in Appendix 1.

2. Sugar Cane

The production of sugar cane for the manufacture of rum continued during the year. Exports of rum to the American Virgin Islands during the year totalled 2,853 gallons, valued at U.S. $7,274.60 compared with U.S. $5,724.40 in 1958. No new varieties of cane have been introduced for the past several years but efforts are being made to introduce new varieties for distribution.

3. Limes

A slight increase is shown in the export of limes as compared with 1958. The export value in 1958 was $312.00 U.S. as compared with $354.00 U.S. in 1959.

4. Coconuts

The selection of seed nuts from high-yielding parent trees growing on local estates as well as on the Agricultural Station is being encouraged and undertaken. It is hoped that it will be possible to import the dwarf variety from St. Lucia in 1960.

5. Bananas

The exports of bananas have increased considerably compared with 1958. Exports for the year amounted to 2,345 stems as against 1,944 in 1958. Prices on the export market improve considerably which led to increase in planting.

6. Food Crops

The unfavourable weather was reflected in the lower volume of locally grown provisions reaching the market. Praedial larceny continues to present no serious problem to the cultivation of food crops in the Colony.

Markets were fairly balanced, however, supplies being maintained by importation of ground provisions and vegetables from other islands.

7. Livestock

(i) *Cattle:* The general interest in cattle raising continued during the year with very good results though exports in 1959 were lower than in 1958. Exports continued to both the French West Indies and St. Thomas Virgin Islands of the United States. Health conditions were very satisfactory. No serious disease was encountered. The prices paid for cattle are as follows:—

Cattle sold in St. Thomas — 16c — 17c per lb. liveweight
Cattle sold in Tortola — 14c — 15c per lb. liveweight

(ii) *Sheep & Goats:* Keen interest in sheep and goat raising continued throughout the year. The distribution of male breeding stock from the Agricultural Station continued but it was necessary to limit the distribution of female stock in order to build up the flock.

The health of these animals can be said to have been satisfactory throughout the year.

(iii) *Swine:* The distribution of pigs for breeding from the Agricultural Station continued throughout the year. There was a remarkable improvement in the production of pigs in the Colony both in quality and quantity. Exports, however, showed a slight decrease as compared with 1958. This decrease can be attributed to increased local comsumption.

Vaccinations against swine fever continued during the year as a prophylatic measure.

(iv) *Poultry:* Due to the increasingly heavy demand for fresh meat and eggs, interest in poultry raising continued at a very high level. There were no diseases encountered among poultry during the year.

(v) *Horsekind:* The breeding of horses, mules and donkeys continued during the year. It was not possible for the Department to make available to farmers a thoroughbred stallion; efforts however, are being made to obtain one as soon as possible. There were some exports of horses and mules to the French West Indies. (four horses and one mule)

8. Agricultural Exports

Livestock: Table I sets out the number of animals exported during 1959 compared with 1957 and 1958. Table II analyses the exports of Livestock according to type and sex.

Table 1

EXPORTS — 1957 — 1959

Year	Destination:	Cattle:	Sheep	Goats:	Swine:	Total:
1957	St. Thomas	404	767	1,249	557	2,977
	French West Indies ...	704	—	—	—	704
	Puerto Rico	—	—	—	—	—
	Leeward Islands ...	—	—	—	—	—
	Totals	1,108	767	1,249	557	2,681
1958	St. Thomas	409	382	836	668	2,295
	French West Indies ...	759	—	—	—	759
	Puerto Rico	—	—	—	—	—
	Leeward Islands ...	67	—	—	—	67
	Totals ...	1,235	382	836	668	3,121
1959	St. Thomas	580	392	846	601	2,419
	French West Indies ...	282	—	—	—	282
	Puerto Rico	—	—	—	—	—
	Leeward Islands ...	—	—	—	—	—
	Totals ...	812	392	846	601	2,651

Table 11:

TYPE & SEX ANALYSIS OF EXPORTS 1959

Type:	Sex:	No:	Total:
Cattle	Bulls	496	
	Steers	1	
	Cows	208	
	Heifers	107	812
Sheep	Rams	191	
	Ewes	201	
	Wethers	—	392
Goats	Bucks	322	
	Does	504	
	Wethers	20	846
Swine	Boars	73	
	Barrows	186	
	Sows	342	601
			2,651

Other Agricultural Products: A summary of the value of the Agricultural exports for 1959, compared with 1955—1958 is set out in Appendix II.

Section II

WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The work of the Department is concerned chiefly with the promotion of livestock production, animal health and, in particular, the management of the Tortola Agricultural Station and Livestock Farm. The following other activities were carried out:—

(a) The provision of planting material to farmers
(b) Forest protection and soil conservation
(c) Administration of agricultural and fisheries loans

B. TORTOLA AGRICULTURAL STATION AND LIVESTOCK FARM

2. Area and Location

The area comprising the Agricultural Station and Livestock Farm is 68 acres and, is situated approximately a quarter of a mile from Road Town. The area is devoted almost exclusively to the production of breeding stock for sale to farmers. A small area is used for experimental planting and other purposes.

3. Cattle

A herd is maintained at the Station for the purpose of demonstrating to farmers improved methods in livestock raising. The herd is of $\frac{3}{4}$ Red Poll x $\frac{1}{4}$ Senegal strain. During the year eight calves were born. Of this number seven were heifers and one was a bull. Seven bulls were sold to farmers for breeding purposes. The herd now comprises:—

Bulls	*Bull Calves*	*Cows*	*Heifers*	*Total*
2	1	19	12	34

4. Horses

The horses that are maintained at the Station are kept strictly for riding; these animals maintained their condition throughout the year.

5. Kentucky Jack Donkey

"Colonel Dunway", the pure bred Jack used for stud purposes, maintained excellent condition throughout the year. The demand for his services is still very great. This Jack has given excellent service and it might be necessary to replace him next year.

6. Mules

One mule now kept for draught purposes maintained excellent condition during the year.

7. Blackhead Persian Sheep

The flock maintained their condition during the year although parasitic infestation was encountered throughout the entire flock. Four lambs were born of which three were rams and one ewe. A total of three were sold to farmers for breeding purposes, (two rams and one ewe). One ram died during the year.

8. Berkshire Pigs

During the year, twenty piglets were born of which eight were boars and twelve gilts. Sales to farmers consisted of eight gilts, and seven boars. The condition of the pigs was maintained throughout the year.

9. Anglo-Nubian Goats

During the year, eight goats were born, five bucks and two does were sold to farmers for breeding purposes. One buck and two does died.

10. Stud Services

Below is a record of stud services by Government owned sires kept at the Tortola Agricultural Station and Livestock Farm:—

Jack "Colonel Dunway"	24
$\frac{3}{4}$ Red Poll x $\frac{1}{4}$ Senegal Bull "Comando"	3
Anglo-Nubian Buck Goat	1
Berkshire Boar	36

11. Distribution of planting material

The propagation of economic and ornamental plants continued throughout the year. Distribution and sale of plants were as follows:—

Cabbage seedlings	7,320
Tomato seedlings	3,582
Egg plant seedlings	2,730
Sweet potato cuttings	7,200
Cassava cuttings	725
Ornamental plants	128
Onion seedlings	8,121
Mahogany seedlings	368
Mahoe seedlings	77
Sweet pepper seedlings	1,612
Papaw seedlings	97
Grafted mango plants	

C. INVESTIGATIONAL WORK

12. Sweet Potatoes

The B44 variety continued to be in great demand and the Department is continuing to make available as much cuttings as possible to farmers.

13. Pangola Grass

As mentioned in last years report, a nursery is maintained at the Agricultural Station and a number of smaller nurseries were established in different parts of the Colony under the supervision of the Agricultural Staff.

This grass has shown very good growth and yield under drought conditions and its overall performance has shown that it is suitable for further extension.

D. EXTENSION AND DEVELOPMENT WORK

14. Inspection Service

The Department continued to maintain an inspection service during the year both for the exportation and the importation of animals and plants.

15. Animal Health

Animal health on the whole was good during the year, there were no outbreaks of disease. The incidence of internal and external parasites was not significant.

Prophylactic vaccinations continued as a routine measure of control. A total of 722 pigs were vaccinated compared with 582 in 1958.

The treatment of sick and injured animals continued to be a pressing demand on the staff of the Department. There were no cases of anaplasmosis or piroplasmosis. Due to advice and prophylactic treatment given, the incidence of tetanus has been reduced as compared with last year. Only one case was encountered and was successfully treated.

Tick Control: The programme of voluntary dipping continued throughout the year. It is gratifying to record that there is still considerable keenness on the part of farmers to ensure that their cattle are kept free from ticks.

16. Grassland Management (Scheme D—2788)

The eight five-acre plots which have been referred to in previous reports are situated in the following places:—

Long Look, Fahie Hill, Sea Cow Bay, Jost Van Dyke, Virgin Gorda-Sound, and Virgin Gorda-Valley.

These plots have been fairly well maintained. They are serving a very useful purpose in demonstrating to farmers improved methods in pasture management and the need for the different types of grasses which indicate their use during drought periods. It is gratifying to record that these plots have aroused interest among farmers and the value of this work is being appreciated.

Over 650 bags of pangola grass were distributed to various parts of the Colony during the year under review and it is now estimated that approximately 150 acre have been established and there is evidence that more and more land is being made available for pangola planting.

17. Forestry (Scheme D—3573)

As stated in last year's report, the recommendations of Mr. H. Fraser, Conservator of Forests, Windward & Leeward Islands in 1958 are being put into effect as rapidly as possible.

Two guts so far have been protected *viz.* Belle Vue and Purcel and it is intended to protect most of the guts in the Colony.

18. Pilot Project in Market Gardening (Scheme D—2717(42)

The pilot project which was commenced as an experiment late in 1957 was continued. The experiment showed good results in 1958 but due to low rainfall in 1959 the results were not very satisfactory.

20. Agricultural Credit:

As stated in last year's report, agricultural credit is designed solely for the purpose of pasture improvement and there is more and more pressing need for this form of assistance. Loans issued during the year amounted to $11,155.00 compared with $6,595.00 in 1958.

There was great need for maintenance work on existing pastures therefore the acreage under new pastures has been reduced greatly. It is estimated that 300 acres have been put under new pastures.

Loans are issued to farmers who have clear title to the land at the rate of 2/3 of the value.

Old Scheme (Agricultural Credit Fund)

1958	11 loans
Cash	$2,320.00 U.S.C.
1959	23 loans
Cash	$5,280.00 U.S.C.

Repayments to 31st December, 1959 amounted to $5,386.92 U.S.C.

New Scheme (Pasture improvement Fund)

1958	27 loans
Cash	$4,275.00 U.S.C.
1959	31 loans
Cash	$5,875.00 U.S.C.

Repayments to 31st December, 1959 amounted to $ 985.19 U.S.C.

21. Fisheries Credit:

The fishing industry has made good strides during the year under review for which this form of assistance is partly responsible. Loans made to fishermen for the purpose of purchasing engines and fishing gear amounted to $1,525.00.

Loans issued in 1958 and 1959 were as follows:—

1958	14 loans
Cash	$4,070.00 U.S.C.
1959	7 loans
Cash	$1,525.00 U.S.C.

Repayment to 31st December, 1959 amounted to $2,694.89 U.S.C..

22. Agricultural Shows:

With improved weather conditions it was possible this year to hold Agricultural Shows. These shows were held at the following places:—

Virgin Gorda, Sound	26th October
Jost Van Dyke, East End	27th October
Long Swamp, Tortola	6th November

All Shows were well attended and were of a very high standard. The livestock exhibited were in excellent condition and entries were numerous. Pasture exhibits were also numerous and of very good stand. The handicraft exhibits were not only numerous but of a very high standard as compared with previous years.

23. Visitors:

Visitors to the Department included the following:—

His Excellency, Sir Alexander Williams, K.C.M.G., M.B.E.
His Honour, G. P. Allsebrook, Administrator, British Virgin Islands.
His Honour, G. J. Bryan, O. B. E., M. C., Administrator, British Virgin Islands.
Mr. G. M. Roddan, Deputy Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State, Colonial Office, London.

Section III

24. Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes:

The following schemes relating to agriculture are in operation..

Scheme D—2787 ("Fisheries Credit Fund")	*Total Grant*	*Expenditure 31/12/59*
The purpose of this scheme is to make available credit to fishermen and thereby increase the production of fish for export and local consumption.	$11,200.00	$1,525.00

Scheme D—2788 ("Grassland Management")	*Total Grant*	*Expenditure 31/12/59*
The purpose of this scheme is to train farmers in improved methods of grassland management.	14,000.00	449.60
Scheme D—2717 (42) ("Pilot Project in Market Gardening")		
The purpose of this scheme is to demonstrate to market gardeners the improved methods in market gardening.	1,400.00	5.60
Scheme D—3573 ("Forestry Development")		
The purpose of this scheme is to demonstrate measures of soil conservation in selected areas as well as re-afforestation in denuded areas and the protection of water courses.	5,600.00	563.64
Scheme D—2974 ("Stock Farm")		
The purpose of this scheme is to provide facilities for feeding up and finishing off beef cattle for export in the best possible condition. Work on this scheme is in progress.	70,115.00	495.40

Section IV

25. Summary of Agricultural Legislation.

The Customs Duties Ordinance, 1927 (No. 9 of 1927) was amended for the increase of the export of livestock, charcoal and bananas.

M. Winter,
Superintendent of Agriculture.

Appendix I

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT, TORTOLA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

RETURN OF RAINFALL

From

January, 1950 to December, 1959

MONTH	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	10-yearly monthly average
January	5.04	1.74	6.49	3.35	2.18	1.16	2.80	2.27	4.57	2.97	3.26
February	9.32	.97	.83	1.01	4.47	1.23	2.72	1.48	2.53	1.48	2.60
March	1.69	.46	1.48	2.94	1.36	1.49	1.62	2.13	.83	.59	1.46
April	3.82	1.11	1.38	1.11	1.68	2.83	1.94	1.11	4.14	2.31	2.74
May	.20	9.56	1.84	1.37	1.84	2.16	3.28	1.45	13.20	5.51	4.04
June	1.67	5.37	2.72	8.60	4.10	3.20	6.97	2.98	8.45	1.49	4.56
July	3.13	4.91	9.15	3.32	1.78	3.23	1.34	3.24	8.00	2.96	4.11
August	7.85	4.58	4.40	4.58	5.15	8.91	4.57	3.23	3.47	2.93	4.97
September	7.35	10.80	14.44	13.05	11.83	9.12	5.14	.56	3.43	3.88	7.96
October	10.41	6.06	4.26	2.04	9.43	4.90	6.30	3.30	6.78	4.37	6.08
November	7.67	3.50	8.61	3.62	4.35	2.90	5.20	7.92	3.82	5.72	5.33
December	1.93	7.36	1.54	2.72	3.03	2.16	3.35	7.11	1.66	3.55	3.44
Total	60.08	56.42	63.14	47.71	51.20	43.29	45.23	36.78	60.88	37.76	50.55

10-year means 50.55 inches

Appendix II

PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

COMMODITY	1955 Value $	1956 Value $	1957 Value $	1958 Value $	1959 Value $	*Average value for previous 4 years* $
Limes	520.54	309.86	192.90	312.50	354.00	333.95
Tomatoes ...	72.77	74.49	9.15	39.00	2.50	48.65
Coconuts ...	1,979.56	1,983.32	1,046.38	1,727.50	1,199.25	1,684.19
Rum	5,271.43	7,288.29	9,651.50	6,522.00	7,274.60	7,183.30
Livestock ...	176,382.17	147,611.48	109,865.90	120,727.50	102,350.00	138,646.76
Other Agricultural products *	24,362.02	29,542.75	10,617.00	10,509.63	12,438.66	18,757.85
Fish	10,267.80	15,353.66	8,815.00	7,146.75	8,120.55	10,395.80
TOTAL	218,856.29	202,163.85	140,197.83	146,984.88	131,739.56	177,050.50

Note: *, Includes forest products, fruits, vegetables and ground provision.

Appendix III

VALUE OF IMPORTS OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES

into the

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Foodstuffs for human consumption	1955 $	1956 $	1957 $	1958 $	1959 $	*Average for previous 4 years* $
Wheaten Flour	94,452.53	90,344.31	61,431.23	53,005.02	50,164.28	74,808.27
Pulses	7,244.54	6,900.98	3,763.99	6,643.37	1,992.60	6,138.22
Cornmeal (Maize)	7,171.95	7,229.44	4,559.45	3,251.10	3,609.63	5,552.98
Rice	9,347.52	13,054.72	9,528.39	9,833.74	9,972.90	10,441.09
Bread & Biscuits	9,555.46	11,847.98	5,732.88	5,601.40	5,477.77	8,184.43
Butter & Substitutes	8,728.89	9,850.48	6,636.08	6,664.30	7,059.29	7,969.94
Lard & Substitutes	12,374.74	10,762.87	7,787.64	7,316.64	6,437.82	9,560.47
Edible Oils ...	2,879.49	3,872.57	3,522.93	4,045.56	4,371.99	3,580.14
Preserved Milk	19,699.05	21,100.65	12,925.53	14,880.12	18,113.62	17,126.34
Cheese	5,787.39	5,651.22	3,880.95	4,639.22	5,344.37	4,989.69
Preserved Meat	18,872.50	21,033.34	12,082.30	17,388.15	17,630.89	17,344.07
Preserved Fish	5,398.30	11,093.62	5,197.75	5,970.43	6,834.77	6,915.02
Fruit & Vegetables ...	11,779.65	1,362.19	1,281.60	9,719.71	12,646.30	6,035.79
Coffee	3,123.87	5,493.70	3,346.67	2,977.65	3,148.30	3,735.47
Tea	639.98	824.16	439.80	378.87	226.50	570.70
Cocoa	2,825.26	2,234.45	1,652.96	1,721.24	1,831.30	2,108.48
Sugar	51,921.67	63,583.02	37,829.76	30,845.06	25,366.97	52,386.62
TOTAL	271,802.79	286,239.70	181,599.90	184,881.58	177,229.30	237,447.72
Animal Feeding Stuffs ...	4,700.55	5,348.72	6,730.84	6,205.94	13,783.39	5,746.51
Fertilizers ...	19.17	—	980.40	—	—	—